AMOS BRONSON ALCOTT

HIS CHARACTER

A Sermon

By CYRUS A. BARTOL

BOSTON
ROBERTS BROTHERS
1888

A. BRONSON ALCOTT'S WORKS.

TABLE-TALK. 16mo. $1.50.

The sentiments exposed are sound, sensible, and in every way calculated to stir the reflective faculties into stronger and healthier action. — *Inter-Ocean.*

CONCORD DAYS. 16mo. $1.50.

Mr. Alcott's style is clear and simple; and in reading this book one feels as though he had been listening to the conversation of a man who had lived with the world's best thinkers, and was always ready to impart in ready speech the results of his own experience and ripened wisdom. — *Courier-Journal.*

RECORD OF A SCHOOL, Exemplifying the Principles and Methods of Moral Culture. With a cut representing the interior of Mr. Alcott's school. 16mo. $1.50.

It is a unique contribution to the literature of education, which, as such, addresses itself to all teachers and parents; but it is also exceedingly valuable to the psychologist and general student as exhibiting most remarkably the imaginative and other powers of the infant mind, when induced to expression by a competent adult sympathy. — *N. Y. Mail.*

TABLETS. With portrait. 16mo. (Full gilt, $2.50.) $1.50.

Every page of his writings evinces a singularly pure and unworldly character. They appear more like leaves torn from some fragrant antique volume than the products of this competitive, rapacious age. It is no wonder that he is listened to in speechless reverence by an esoteric circle, and that his words are clothed with an authority beyond the power of gaudy rhetoric or purely intellectual demonstration. — *N. Y. Tribune.*

SONNETS AND CANZONETS. 16mo. $1.00.

A volume which is unparalleled in literature. It is a collection of sonnets by A. Bronson Alcott, who is now eighty-two years old, and all of which have been written since last September [1882]. The volume is called "Sonnets and Canzonets," and we know not where to look for another illustration of such sustained and melodious vigor in a man beyond fourscore. There is a mellowness and sweetness of feeling in these verses, a kindly appreciation of friends and friendships, which is very beautiful.

The sonnets are poems to persons whose names are not mentioned, but the internal evidence identifies fourteen as addressed to the poet's wife, three to Emerson, two to Thoreau, and one each to the son and two nephews of Dr. Channing, one each to Hawthorne, Margaret Fuller, Wendell Phillips, Theodore Parker, Garrison, John Brown, Dr. Bartol, Dr. Furness, and F. B. Sanborn, Mr. Alcott's neighbor and friend, who prefaces the neat volume with a letter to Mr. Alcott and a very pleasant and interesting essay upon that fascinating theme, "The Sonnet," which is graced with some very rare and beautiful illustrations of that form of poem. — *Harper's Weekly.*

NEW CONNECTICUT. An Autobiographical Poem. Edited, with Introduction, by F. B. Sanborn. With portrait of Mr. Alcott. 16mo. $1.50.

Sold by all booksellers. Mailed, post-paid, on receipt of price, by the publishers,

ROBERTS BROTHERS, BOSTON.

LOUISA M. ALCOTT'S WRITINGS.

"Miss Alcott is really a benefactor of households." — H. H.

"Miss Alcott has a faculty of entering into the lives and feelings of children that is conspicuously wanting in most writers who address them and to this cause, to the consciousness among her readers that they are hearing about people like themselves, instead of abstract qualities labelled with names, the popularity of her books is due." — MRS. SARAH J. HALE.

"Dear Aunt Jo! You are embalmed in the thoughts and loves of thousands of little men and little women" — EXCHANGE.

Little Women; or, Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy. With illustrations 16mo $1.50

Hospital Sketches, and Camp and Fireside Stories. With illustrations. 16mo 1.50

An Old-Fashioned Girl. With illustrations. 16mo 1.50

Little Men: Life at Plumfield with Jo's Boys. With illustrations. 16mo 1.50

Jo's Boys and How they Turned Out. A sequel to "Little Men" With portrait of "Aunt Jo" 16mo 1.50

Eight Cousins; or, The Aunt-Hill. With illustrations. 16mo . . . 1.50

Rose in Bloom. A sequel to "Eight Cousins." 16mo . . . 1.50

Under the Lilacs. With illustrations. 16mo 1.50

Jack and Jill. A Village Story. With illustrations. 16mo . . . 1.50

Work: A Story of Experience. With character illustrations by Sol Eytinge. 16mo 1.50

Moods. A Novel. New edition, revised and enlarged. 16mo . . 1.50

Silver Pitchers and Independence. A Centennial Love Story. 16mo 1.25

Proverb Stories. New edition, revised and enlarged. 16mo . . . 1.25

Spinning-Wheel Stories. With illustrations. 16mo 1.25

A Garland for Girls, and Other Stories. With illustrations. 16mo 1.25

My Boys, &c. First volume of Aunt Jo's Scrap-Bag. 16mo . . 1.00

Shawl-Straps. Second volume of Auut Jo's Scrap-Bag. 16mo . . $1.00

Cupid and Chow-Chow, &c. Third volume of Aunt Jo's Scrap-Bag. 16mo 1.00

My Girls, &c. Fourth volume of Aunt Jo's Scrap-Bag. 16mo . . 1.00

Jimmy's Cruise in the Pinafore, &c. Fifth volume of Aunt Jo's Scrap-Bag. 16mo 1.00

An Old-Fashioned Thanksgiving, &c. Sixth volume of Aunt Jo's Scrap Bag. 16mo 1.00

Little Women. Illustrated. Embellished with nearly 200 characteristic illustrations from original designs drawn expressly for this edition of this noted American Classic. One small quarto, bound in cloth, with emblematic designs 2.50

Little Women Series. Comprising Little Women; Little Men; Eight Cousins; Under the Lilacs; An Old-Fashioned Girl; Jo's Boys; Rose in Bloom; Jack and Jill. 8 large 16mo volumes in a handsome box 12.00

Each volume is complete in itself and is sold separately.

Lulu's Library. Vols I., II. A collection of New Stories. 16mo . 1.00

These books are for sale at all bookstores, or will be mailed, post-paid, on receipt of price, to any address.

ROBERTS BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,

Boston, Mass.

AMOS BRONSON ALCOTT

HIS CHARACTER

A Sermon

By CYRUS A. BARTOL

BOSTON
ROBERTS BROTHERS
1888

University Press:
John Wilson and Son, Cambridge.

AMOS BRONSON ALCOTT.

AND YE ALSO SHALL BEAR WITNESS. — John xv. 27.

OF WHAT? Of any event, doctrine, scheme, miracle, or prophecy? No, but of *me*, a person, — of who I was, and what I meant and did and said: my discourse, history, or biography only shows my purpose and mission and mind. Such is the substance and sum of Christianity.

With a regard for me I could never comprehend, and which, in the measure of its fondness, seemed to me even somewhat exaggerated or misplaced, Mr. Alcott, the childlike man, often during his life, and in his last sickness, and on his death-bed, said to your minister, "You will speak of me when

I am gone." It was as his last will and testament, which as a legatee I receive, and as administrator I now try to fulfil. There is, let me say, to my thought, a singular pathos as well as confidence implied in this charge, or trust, — as though he who gave it would say, " Whoever else has misunderstood or not understood, you have understood and can make others understand my message. Take it on a little further, then, with the accent of your voice and the telephone of your desk," — just as those in the ring about a speaker convey his sense afterward to the outer edges of the deaf, unhearing crowd.

In attempting, however, to discharge for him this office, let me hope his spirit will pardon me if I should be led not to dwell on the great philosophy, whose depths many of his compeers surviving are more competent than I am to sound, but rather on his moral features. Indeed, I am convinced the views we, wise or simple, take of the world as the best

or worst possible, are largely resolvable for their source into our own individual disposition, character, and fortune. Scarce any logic is too refractory to be irreducible in the fire of our affections, as the hardest flint melts under the blow-pipe's flame. Thus, for example, the truth Mr. Alcott most insisted on of the personality of God, grew for him out of his rare inborn piety. It might not be difficult to cite cases of philosophers with whom misfortune in life, attended with ill temper consequent, has been the mother of an illegitimate pessimism in their cross-grained, growling unfaith. If Mr. Alcott was an optimist, it was because of a God-like incapacity in the purity of his eyes to behold iniquity. So he was a jubilant prophet. No doubt some of the noblest souls and deepest thinkers have been unable to conceive of God save in impersonal terms. All formulation of deity is difficult, — none so hard as the impersonal. Yet that Mr. Alcott could

admit only those personal traits which allow love and prayer and communication and communion, is a fact to the credit of an affectionate, sunny nature no cloud could eclipse, while interesting in the creed of a man to whom all speculation, ancient and modern, was familiar, and none of the great sages unknown. Let me therefore supplement such notices of him as I have seen, with some stress on this prominent trait which the commentators on his career have so generally overlooked. For, in this divine personal idea which he maintained, he was a benefactor to others; and among them I incur to him an intellectual debt.

Mr. Emerson, rapt with the love of nature and swept by the French philosophy of Victor Cousin, so prevalent half a century ago, was long, if not always, inclined to the notion of impersonality in the deity. To Mr. Alcott, despite his reverence for his friend, this was a down grade. He would reverse

the engine. He proposed an upward track. In a conversation I had with Mr. Emerson and an eminent clergyman, Emerson asked: "Why not describe the universal power as It rather than He?" When I remonstrated, my brother accorded with Emerson, and though I was not persuaded, I appeared to be overwhelmed.

To Mr. Alcott the divinity was no "It," but "Thou." *It* was the same as *not*. There was no unconscious energy. All through, the creation was to him, not individual, yet personal being; not a limited self apart from other selves, but a conscious life for us to spring from and lean on and have relations with, to love and be loved by, and to rise to out of the dust of the valley and the shadow of death. The pantheism of material beauty so wrought on Mr. Emerson's genius and absorbed into itself his heart, that he said he could see in his friend but part of the landscape under the one over-soul. Such

tendency in him was a line over-produced and corrected by other spiritual statements of his own. This eagle, with a pen for a plume, flew alternately opposite ways, and would fain overpass the horizon and scale the sky. Mr. Alcott had only one motion, or direction. Like the beloved disciple of Jesus, he soared vertically without a shadow in his flight. There was no variation in his compass; no position he ever took did he have to alter; no personal equation to correct. His chronometer was without reference to latitude: he kept sidereal time. He dealt at first hand with the Mover of the stars in their courses. Inferior to Emerson in richness of fancy and in literary gift, he was not, as some have thought, his echo or continuator, but his counterpart. When I came to Boston in 1837, having known Emerson from 1832, he asked whom I was acquainted with in town. I answered that I was a stranger in the city as yet. He said

that there was in it but one man, Mr. Alcott, influencing him at that early time as much as he did Alcott, who was of an incarnate piety.

So sublime was Alcott's sense even of identity as a constant quantity with the Supreme, that he told the late Henry James, — that embodier and progenitor of worship and wit, — "I can say with Jesus, *I and my Father are one.*" "Did you ever get any body to believe you?" so James, who once humorously in my presence described himself as "an abject Christian," himself told me was his own reply.

But no such side-long contempt could flank Alcott, or drive him for a moment out of manners which I think were the most gentle and gracious under all fair or unfair provocation I ever beheld. Were it possible, he was courteous to excess. He would have been polite to Satan, were that a personage he could have met; he would bless "Nickie

Ben," like Robert Burns. He may have brought something of this noble, courtly demeanor from the Virginian gentry he had converse with in his earlier life; but it was in him the core and substance of the material, the grain he was made of, and no varnish or veneer. The furthest he ever went in complaint or criticism of any treatment of himself was in saying of Carlyle, to whom Emerson had introduced him during his visit to England, and who laughed at what he called Alcott's potato-gospel: "I accuse Mr. Carlyle of inhospitality to my thought." Carlyle had not grace to learn that here was a man at home with God, while Carlyle himself, splendid with talent and laden with trophies of achievement, was in the universe but a lost child, weeping and wailing in unintermittent complaint, with the town-crier ringing his bell after him, out of sight of his Father's house.

Certainly Mr. Alcott wanted to be heard.

He coveted every ear; he was hungry for an audience, — and thus unlike Emerson, who was equally willing to be silent or to speak. Conversation was his passion, but it became monologue: he soliloquized in company. As his thoughts though great were few, the same auditors, when put through their regular round and incessant permutation, grew weary. Emerson himself, a good listener, declared toward the end that Alcott had ceased to be useful to him: but how many must have become, in his declining strength, useless to the Concord Sage at last! To most people Alcott was tedious, in part because they did not wish to endure his topic and his strict test of sincerity and duty. I suppose usually prisoners are tired of standing even a short time at the bar, and would gladly, could they have their choice, have if not prove an alibi, and in fact be elsewhere. But Alcott was not tired of the sameness and repetition of his ideas. They were fa-

vorites, and as the beloved sons of God to him. Dear to him as first principles, he fed on them day by day, as the chamois crops the thin sweet grass of the mountain slope. He loved and lived in God and man. Charity that could draw a line outside or give a touch beyond his broad welcome, I never saw: it was an immeasurable circle; it was a cloak for others' sins, not his own; it was a mantle without hem, and wide as the world. He kept in his breast for all creatures open house. There were persons whom from personal antipathy, and in the throng toward his door, Mr. Emerson did not desire to see. Alcott's arms were open as a sunflower in full bloom, — a globe of gold. Everybody was received. From his net he cast not the bad away.

He could differ bravely in opinion. When one in his presence expressed the dogma of man's date and derivation from the "elements," with a quick gesture and noiseless

stamp of the foot he uttered his total dissent. He wanted to talk. Socrates had the same appetite, and he said he was like an ass, whom a wisp of hay could draw all over Athens. Alcott would ransack Boston for a straw. Nor in the dialogue was he barren and dry. He evinced the humor which descended to that finely endowed and accomplished daughter, who could not stay after he went. When one said: "I know Mr. Alcott all to pieces," he said: "Why not say you know me altogether?" His humor was geniality made perfect, and an extraordinary benignity. In his famous Boston school he adopted the vicarious principle, and appointed himself, instead of the disobedient pupil, to bear the stroke of the ferule or rod. He was a Christian, and held sonship as well as fatherhood in God. Yet he tied himself to no orthodox formula. Not the historic individual Jesus with all his glory, but the filial ideal was his second person in

the Trinity. He thought Jesus was "Hebraic and heady." He was not a fighter, but a born priest. Yet never was the courage of conviction more perfect than in this one among the lambs of God. When at the rendition of the slave Anthony Burns the butts and muzzles of the policemen's and soldiers' clubs and pistols, at the Court-House, were pointed over the stairs and whirled in the air, he stood calmly on the upper step, with his long walking-stick under his arm, and asked the janitor on guard at the door, "Why are we not within?" But he did no execution with his cane, save, when resistance to the law was hopeless, to walk quickly away. He should be painted for posterity in that attitude on the granite landing, with the guns and lances in the rear for a background.

For a long time Mr. Alcott was very poor. One day, when an alms of ten dollars in the way of surprise had been added to his slen-

der store, a tramp appeared and knocked, and begged for aid. Mr. Alcott, whose ill-fitted abode betrayed too plainly his scanty means, handed to him that scripture-farthing, rich as the widow's mite, all he had, saying, "I hope you will return it, for I am myself in need." Mrs. Alcott, the good sensible woman, coming in afterward, justly chided him for giving the *bread from his children's mouths*.

But some time after, lo and behold! the rogue did come back, and said to Mr. Alcott: "When I took this money I did not intend to restore it; but there it is." How seldom in the history of the planet has an instance of moral suasion occurred like that! Alcott's goodness was too much even for the thief. I have lost money often likewise, without his magic power to secure the refunding, being, far more than was he, a real dupe. During the period of his destitution, Emerson was a frequent visitor at his house in Concord.

Alcott told me that Emerson, as he went away, would without a word, leave money, perhaps fifty dollars, on the mantel against which he had leaned.

Alcott admired Parker, yet naturally had imperfect sympathy with his rough sarcastic speech. He said to me: "Parker will go into politics, will he not? He is not above it." He considered him a righteous actor on a lower plane. When Parker delivered his sharp thrusts, always accepting the challenge for a duel with his opponents, Alcott excused him, saying: "It is near Thanksgiving time, and the geese and turkeys must be killed." Channing, Alcott admired without stint. Stout, devoted Garrison had him for his early coadjutor. When Garrison was mobbed and dragged through Boston streets, Alcott was near him and said, "I do not see why my body is not as fit for a bullet as any other." The physical seemed in him to spring from a metaphysical courage, — a cer-

tain necessity of thinking freely and acting on his thought. Charles Sumner once said to him, "You ought not to think as you do." "Why ought I not?" inquired Alcott. Mr. Sumner quoted a text in point. But Alcott admitted no authority contrary to his own mind.

For Phillips, because of his bitter tongue, Alcott had a qualified approval, but said to me: "I do not like to give him up." Webster, he declared, "had a hole in his head," — it was empty of the higher law. But in the tone and manner of his remarks concerning these and all other persons, he showed nothing less than angelic goodness. He was a merciful judge; he took them all under his wing. Here for once was an accommodating bosom devoid of malignity and without dimensions in its charity. When I think of him, I think of Abraham Lincoln's phrase, — "With malice toward none." According to Emerson's expression about the President

who died for his people, the shepherd giving his life for the sheep, Alcott's heart, in all its bigness, had no room for the memory of a wrong; that is, not minding or disposed to remind a transgressor of those offences which are perhaps impossible for any of us at once to forget.

Mr. Alcott belonged to the Christ-class, if it be proper so to classify. Nothing, nobody could make him ungracious. If one came as for an oracle to his house, deferring to him, but paying no attention to his wife, he would talk to the caller with the same invincible mild civility, then rise and kiss his wife, making no remark after the visitor had gone.

He was an unordained, or rather unsettled minister. He regarded any clerical convocation as his natural place. Was not he a member with a claim to speak? Were it denied, he would retire. He thought I did not care enough to defend his right. For that I had no heart. He outdid Lord Ches-

terfield's rules in his unassuming spontaneous respectfulness. But in his own not low esteem of himself he was entitled to attention. When he once somewhat showily placarded a public conversation as about to take place, Emerson, who was to share it, said to him, "Mr. Alcott, always understate."

As the planets that flame toward the zenith stoop also on occasion to the lower sky, and burn and gyrate apparently close by, so the advent of some souls is as though they had dipped out of heaven to an earthly horizon, from which it does not seem that they at the outset ever rose. These natives of another clime wear for their dress the common mortal stuff over a temper of celestial spark and supernal mold. As the flowers wilt on their coffins while a fairer flower withers within, out of their very earth and cold clay springs for us as we look on an invisible blossom of faith never plucked from garden or field, and which the round globe is

not quickened to germinate, or big enough to be its bulb.

Not myrrh and aloes, but tears and prayers we bring. The custom of embalming as in Egypt, and which the women and Nicodemus seem to have proposed with the body of Jesus, intimates the sense in the human mind of something that is beautiful, and fit to survive. O king, O queen, live forever! We will build a pyramid for your monument and tomb. Socrates bade his friends bury his body, and catch his spirit if they could! We ground arms of carnal weapons to the last enemy, but our souls make no surrender. We take leave of what is left, the remains; but do we not call them "relics" because we believe something — all and more than all we knew — has escaped? Thus there is nought bitter in our hand or mind.

On the night preceding Miss Louisa May Alcott's funeral, I had a dream of the farewell scene to follow, and in which I was to

have a part in a few hours. In that vision, or pre-vision, with my eyes closed in sleep, I saw white ghostly hands softly take away a crown of thorns from the bier, and lay it out of sight; and I said: "What need of further ceremony? Who shall presume to speak now?"

My sermon to-day has been in discharge of a sacred commission. In my long ministry, though persons before dying have often requested that I should offer the last prayers after they had expired, by none but Mr. Alcott have I been directed to add as in open meeting somewhat of the tale of their career. As the reiterated, fond, pleading suggestion clung to my mind, I thought of Hamlet's speech to his friend Horatio, —

> "If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
> Absent thee from felicity awhile,
> And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
> To tell my story."

But how poorly for Mr. Alcott I have told it! How I have skipped what others will

supply, and not poured out half my own heart! I have quite failed if you see not, as I point to it, the halo round his head.

He had queried if it were necessary to die; he thought he might round out the century in this lower life. He had an unquestioning faith. He lived as he believed, and on what he believed. He no more doubted the shining of truth than that of the sun, the influx of the spirit than the flowing of the brooks, the inspiration from on high than the rising of the wind. It was no logical beat he trod, but a spiral ascent as of a flame he was lifted in.

It is his posture I call your attention to, more than to his literature, creditable to him as his writings are. In our vegetating or animal moods we cast in our lot with the clod; and so we have no more assurance of a destiny than does the plant or the beast. But when we are exalted with affection and engrossed in an object, we credit continuance

beyond all crumbling. Self-oblivion is God's remembrance. Our love and what we love, if we love upward and not down, insure us. In every heart, purely and wholly given to another, the heavenly office issues its ticket and warrant against all accidents by the way. Out of love to God and man is born that third devotion to some particular person which all divinity and humanity are under bonds to preserve and protect. The beam from above cannot lead astray. We walk in the light the saints leave behind them unawares, because backward they never look.

APPENDIX.

MR. ALCOTT died March 4, and was buried March 6. His daughter, LOUISA M. ALCOTT, died on the day of his funeral, and was buried March 8, two days later. The following touching tribute was paid by DR. BARTOL at the funeral services.

MY FRIENDS, — Deeply moved at the funeral of Mr. Alcott, out of respect to those who were to follow me, I spoke very briefly. If I should say more to-day, will you pardon me, as it is at the special request of the family, — not that I think a priest or clergyman is alone, or of course, peculiarly fit for such a service as this. I feel especially to-day that I am but a substitute. At any mortal's decease the question always arises, who shall officiate, that is, perform the last offices or say the final words? Who should, indeed, do so here and now? I think, were it possible, it should be those Little Women and Little Men who by the

millions all over the land answered to these titles, with which by Miss Alcott they were addressed, — boys and girls turned straightway into a sort of manhood and womanhood, re-created into a consciousness of a purpose in life, and of that innate expansion toward the adult which is prefigured by every doll in the nursery and all our athletic sports. How she made and makes them over still, here and in the other tongues her books have been translated into! She cries to them to awake from slumber, and be aware of their call as potential factors of the common weal, — like enlarged living photographs, miniatures but for the present moment, yet growing constituents of the home, society, the State and Church! For all her molding of youth into loyal affections and lofty aspirations, her elevation of them above a mean spirit and petty aims, the community, as for the elements of its well-being, owes her the sort of debt we are under to the seedsman, who from his little packages gives us good corn and wheat to sow in our ground: only that these thoughts and sentiments scattered broadcast into the juvenile mind are the germs of a different harvest in the production of character, — that other bread of life which the master says is every word proceeding out of the mouth

of God. To the little men and women who are such because of her, I would therefore fain give place in these not sad, but sober solemnities. But there would not be room for them if they came. This roof could not contain one in a thousand even of the Massachusetts neighborhood. I can but lisp a syllable of their hearty tribute, that would ring from their own fresh lips like bells, compared to which the voices of age are but worn strings or muffled drums. Yet let us think of them as servants in this ceremony of honor. None are sincerer mourners than they. They did not think she had finished her message, but had more to say. As we go again to the place we have been well fed at, their eyes, having found such a feast in her books, had grown hungry for the board they are sorry she is not spared to spread again. Far as we can, let us give them their part in this hour.

The ripe parental fruit dropped from this family tree (how fitly!) on a Sunday morning that had no more peace and brightness than was in a saintly soul. Why did the angel, passing as with the flutter and wind of his wing, blow from the bough close by what was not immature, yet seems to fall so premature? The two were so wont to be together, God saw they could not well live apart.

As the young mother in classic story gave her breast to her famished sire in prison, so this daughter, such a support to her father on earth, was needed by him even in heaven. But for her decease, not his timely and seasonable one, we must be permitted to weep. Lovely and pleasant in their lives, in death they are not divided. Yet this is for us an occasion of grief; and I would summon, with the now mostly grown-up children, the surviving soldiers out of those dismal sick wards, birthplace of "Hospital Sketches," which her face was one to light up, as the painters make the manger lustrous where Christ was born in the night. They would have something to say which we can scarce imagine or presume, even had we heard it, in our mimic tones to repeat or report.

But the grateful celebrators of these obsequies transcend any classification. The banished friend of whose mortal remains alone (not of her) we take leave to-day, belongs as an author to that class in which Walter Scott is a great leader, who have added in this world of toil and pain to the innocent and wholesome joy of human life. The problem of being they have not attempted to solve. We most of us do not care to have it solved, — we want our curiosity tempted still. But the boon of

being they have represented, and with the glass of their genius for us to look through have magnified into beauty, beyond all the shadows and short comings of our lot. We men and women thank the woman whose fancy was goodness and her dramatic talent kindly intent, the play of her mind fealty to the rights of men and women, black or white. She has taught us while she entertained. She was the child of her mother's benevolence, conscience, and native good sense. She was her philosophic and unworldly father's counterpart in lucid conception, with an added literary gift. She was that mystic thinker's translation, clear as crystal, into the mother tongue of unquestionable truth. She was his indisputable popularity.

Whiling away our weary hours with the *personæ* of all her figuring on this temporary stage, like Walter Scott again lifting debt with the little mighty pry of his pen, she beyond all pinch at last of such need still persistently wrought as with the illusory strength of fever in her brain, till the writers' cramp came to her wrist as a signal something was ready to crack in the fibre more deep within. The old simple fables are true of human producers, that the bees do not make honey or the worms spin silk for themselves. She

at least gave herself to her task, as the Lord, whom she revered, laid down his life for the sheep.

But the large invitation of this house that I should pour out all my heart (as if I could!) must not cause me to forget that others, whose right is greater than my privilege, are invited to speak. May the example of good cheer this noble woman, like her parents, has set to make every cloud of trial luminous, have transference without end!

If I may add a word of critical estimate, for which the funeral service offered no fit place or opportunity, I would mention a certain natural and human property as the distinction of Miss Alcott's books for the young. There are writers for boys and girls who have had perhaps more grace in their periods, and a greater imaginative power. The peculiarity of her volumes is a reality of representation which avoids all claim or appearance of being literary. There is scarce aught in them that can be called style. There is no intervention, but direct and instant communication between the author and the reader. The children mind not the way of saying, they are so delighted with the thing said. The medium is so transparent, like a pellucid pane of glass, they are not

aware that it exists; and Miss Alcott herself does not seem to know. She unlatches the door to one house, and they all find it is their own house which they enter. She unroofs every dwelling in the land, while she describes the home she is acquainted with and may have been brought up in. This mannerless manner, though it may border on over-plainness in speech or written discourse, has, especially to juvenile unsophisticated minds, a singular charm. Here is a friend in correspondence with them who is one of themselves; and they read her lines as those of an actual letter to their address, or seem to hear it as a delicious piece of news, or a whispered confidence, though it be an open secret for every lad and lass in the land. The successive stories are like epistles to Romans or Corinthians, of small stature indeed, and living in Boston or New York. With what grateful surprise they learn that, though little, they are men and women after all! This quality of Miss Alcott's productions, whose titles answer so perfectly to the contents, may in part at least account for the extraordinary popularity they have won, and for the circulation that may happily betide new editions in years to come.